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ture of the peculiarity, these names to otherwise follow the rules for the names of species.

Further, it would be extremely good if those botanists who are interested would discuss the matter of names, and agree upon a code name to be adopted in every case of certain common varieties—for instance, “*albiflorus*” for a pure white mutation of the flower, in which case the name would be intelligible without the necessity of quoting the author’s name.

This admitted, my *Sisyrinchium anceps* becomes f. *pallidiflorum*, since it is clearly a “form” in the technical sense. At the same time, there is room for much difference of opinion as to what is a “form,” and it may often take patient observation and experiment to determine the rank of a plant. Mr. C. R. Orcutt tells us, in the last number of his paper, how a yellow-flowered *Mimulus cardinalis* narrowly escaped ranking as a new species, while now it has no name at all, though as a “form” it fully deserves one, and a very interesting form it is, when we remember that throughout organic nature, whether plants, birds, moths or mollusks, red has always a tendency to revert to yellow. What, again, of the *Ranunculus aquatilis* group, with its hosts of so-called species, which Hiern says are formed by the flow of water and like obvious conditions, and comes with mathematics to prove it, while those systematists who listen to him turn away from these plants in scorn, “not even *good* varieties,” to them quite abominable because we can know something of their nature?

T. D. A. COCKERELL.

West Cliff, Colorado, July 17, 1889.

### Remarks on the Preceding Paper.

The questions which Mr. Cockerell has so forcibly discussed have appealed to all systematists and have yet never been satisfactorily solved. Incidentally, I have given them considerable thought and had gone so far as to introduce the term “forma” into my catalogue of the Plants of New Jersey, now in press, in very much the manner suggested by him, restricting its use, however, not necessarily to variations with but a slight degree of permanency, but to such as we may, perhaps, term physiological rather than structural. Variations in color are one set of these

characters; others are to be found in size, in odor, perhaps also the natural doubling of flowers might be recognized in this manner, as this involves a mere transformation of parts and no essential structural differences, although here we are running pretty close to morphological characters; I am not sure, however, that it would be best to rigidly exclude certain of these. The difficulty will be to limit the use of the term to some definite set or sets of characters. If we enforce merely relative permanency we shall all have different views as to what this implies.

The whole subject of the limitation of the various ranks in classification is one which botanists will do well to consider and the pages of the BULLETIN will be open to communications on the topic. By the presentation of different views we might be enabled to reach some valuable conclusions to guide us in subsequent work. The difficulty in restricting the use of "form" is met with in variety, in species, in genus, and, indeed, in every term of our system. Let us have a discussion of the matter, if for nothing else, in order to ascertain just what thoughts are in the minds of botanists of the present generation, for all must have thought more or less about it. Then those of us who meet in Indianapolis will be in a position to talk it over in all its aspects.

I can hardly agree with Mr. Cockerell in the (implied) advisability of changing a published name, however, if a supposed species or variety was to be reduced to a form, for I presume that the trouble that this would give the future student would outweigh the slight advantage of a descriptive adjective; so I should be for forma *Jonesii* of his supposed white harebell if it had been published as *Campanula Jonesii* or *C. rotundifolia*, var. *Jonesii*, for in the future it would make no difference either to Jones or himself, and he would not disturb nomenclature by introducing another adjective, *albiflorus*.

N. L. BRITTON.

### The Mandioca.

BY THOMAS MORONG.

In an economic point of view the Mandioca or Manioc is one of the most important agricultural productions both of Brazil and Paraguay. It takes the place of wheat in the northern conti-